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HISTORY OF U. S. NAVY HOSPITAL SHIP RED ROVER

The first hospital ship of the United States Navy was originally a commercial side-wheel river steamer RED ROVER built at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, in 1859. She was purchased at New Orleans on 7 November 1861 by the Confederate States of America to serve as a barracks or accommodation ship for the men of the Confederate States Floating Battery NEW ORLEANS which had been placed in commission at New Orleans on 14 October 1861 by Lieutenant John Julius Guthrie, Confederate States Navy. The latter officer jointly commanded the floating battery and the RED ROVER, who had no armament but was more for the men to live on than for active service. She made her way up the Mississippi River as far as Island No. 10 where she assisted in the blockade of the Western Gunboat Flotilla of the Union Army. Lieutenant Guthrie was relieved of his command in March 1862 by Lieutenant G. W. Averett, CSN, and on the 15th of March, Island No. 10 saw the commencement of a naval bombardment by the Western Gunboat Flotilla and Mortar Fleet of the Union Army. Though the floating battery NEW ORLEANS was jarred by the explosions of shells, under and around, she was unharmed. RED ROVER, however, was put out of action early in the bombardment by a piece of shell which cut through all her decks to her bottom and caused her to leak considerably but not dangerously. Abandoned as a quarters ship for the NEW ORLEANS after this event she was safely moored on the opposite side of the Island Number 10 and was captured by the Federal gunboat MOUND CITY when that Island fell into Union hands on 7 April 1862. Volunteer Acting Master Cyrenius *Deminey or Dominy of the MOUND CITY made the actual capture of the RED ROVER. He later distinguished himself by capture of the Rebel steamer CLARA DOLSON in the White River and was on the upper deck and escaped death by scalding when the boilers of the MOUND CITY were exploded by a Confederate shell in June 1862. He saved many of the men of his gunboat on that occasion although two were shot as he hauled them aboard while in the water. For this and other gallantry he received a promotion to Acting Volunteer Lieutenant upon recommendation of Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote, USN, who reported: "His moral character is excellent and we have no braver or more correct officer among the Volunteer Lieutenants."

RED ROVER was repaired by Commander Kilty and the engineers of the MOUND CITY to enable her passage up river to St. Louis, Missouri, where she was fitted out as a floating summer hospital for the Western Flotilla. Army Quartermaster George D. Wise reported on 25 May 1862: "I am in St. Louis preparing the RED ROVER for a hospital for our sick and wounded. The Sanitary Commission have rendered me valuable advice and aid, and the RED ROVER will have every requisite for the purpose she is intended."

*Signature appears as Dominy although official records spell his name "Deminey".

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George H. Bixby became the senior medical officer of the floating hospital and on 3 June 1862 acknowledged his appointment as Assistant Surgeon in the U. S. gunboat service to Flag Officer Charles H. Davis, USN, commanding the Western Flotilla on the Mississippi River: " . . . I accept with gratitude this notice you have seen fit to take of me, willingly subscribing myself amenable to the laws, regulations and discipline of the Navy as they are or may be established by the Congress of the United States or other competent authority." He remained the senior medical officer of RED ROVER throughout the Civil War. He was assisted by another medical doctor from his hometown of Boston, Doctor George H. Hopkins, and other surgeons.

Commander and Fleet Captain Alexander M. Pennock, USN, was in charge of fitting out the Western Flotilla at the Naval Depot at Cairo, Illinois. RED ROVER reported to him for duty 10 June 1862. On that day Pennock wrote to Flag Officer Charles H. Davis: "..... I have to thank Captain Wise, Assistant Quartermaster, for his untiring and successful exertion in the equipment of this boat, and I hope you will approve of all he has done. He informs me that she has stores on board for her crew for three months and medical supplies sufficient for 200 men for three months. She is also abundantly supplied with delicacies for the sick and has on board 300 tons of ice. Captain Wise acknowledged his obligations to the Western Sanitary Commission for the great interest they took in the equipment of this boat, for their advice and substantial aid, to the amount in dollars and cents of \$3,500 gratuitously bestowed. The boat is supplied with everything necessary for the restoration to health of sick and disabled seamen. I have directed Captain McDaniel and the surgeon to report to you for orders and for assignment to their particular duties." *Captain McDaniel, never further identified, was the first commanding officer of RED ROVER.

On 12 June 1862, in a letter to Flag Officer Foote, Quartermaster Wise wrote from the Office of the Naval Depot at Cairo: "I wish you could see our hospital boat, the RED ROVER, with all her comforts for the sick and disabled seamen. She is decided to be the most complete thing of the kind that ever floated and is every way a decided success. The Western Sanitary Association gave us in cost of articles \$3,500. The ice box of the steamer holds 300 tons. She has bathrooms, laundry, elevator for the sick from the lower to upper deck, amputating room, nine different water-closets, gauze blinds to the windows to keep the cinders and smoke from annoying the sick, two separate kitchens for sick and well, a regular corps of nurses, and two water-closets on every deck."

* NOTE: Acting Master C. H. Daniels, identified by some as her commanding officer was stationed at the Washington Navy Yard during the period in question, there being letters signed by him at that location in the files of the National Archives.

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RED ROVER received her first hospital patient on 11 June 1862, Seaman David Sans who was a cholera victim from the gunboat BENTON. Four other patients were received that day, thirteen on the 12th, and thirty-eight patients were received from ships of the Western Flotilla on the 13th. Her great benefit to the Western Flotilla on the Mississippi River was underscored by Flag Officer Charles H. Davis on 14 June 1862 when he wrote to Quartermaster George D. Wise, U. S. Army: "..... No one but those who have witness can comprehend the sufferings to which our sick have been exposed by the absence of proper accommodations on board the gunboats and by the necessity for frequent and sometimes hasty change of place. The wounded and patients suffering from fever occupy, under the direction of the surgeon, those parts of the ship which are most quiet and best ventilated. When the ship was cleared for action, as often happened when lying near Fort Pillow, it was necessary to take down their cots and hammocks more than quickly into out-of-the-way and uncomfortable places. This must always be attended with pain and distress, if not positive injury. The arrival of the RED ROVER will put a stop to all this, promote the efficiency of the Squadron by procuring comfort and means of restoration for the sick. All the conveniences and appliances of a hospital are fully provided and to these are added the neatness and order essential to so large an establishment." Though certain steamers including the CITY OF MEMPHIS had been pressed into service as hospital transports, they lacked accommodations, cleanliness and the medical staff which could be afforded by the RED ROVER. Only the latter ship could be truly described as she often was: "Floating Naval Hospital Ship 'Red Rover.'"

On 17 June 1862 the Federal gunboat MOUND CITY who had captured the RED ROVER, took part in the attack on the White River which resulted in the capture of the Confederate Forts at St. Charles, Arkansas. During the action a shell from the Rebel batteries penetrated the port casemate of the MOUND CITY, killed three men in its flight; and exploded her steam drum. Eight men were scalded to death and 43 were either drowned or shot after leaping overboard. The total casualties were 135 out of a total of 175 on board the gunboat. Many of these men were admitted to the Army Hospital at Memphis, Tennessee. Thirty-seven were transferred from the hospital on 19 June 1862 to RED ROVER for transportation to hospitals in Illinois. The Mortar Fleet of the Army was present at Memphis which had surrendered on 6 June and Doctor Bixby obtained approval of his request for male nurses of that fleet to accompany the RED ROVER up river where they assisted in removal of the sick to hospitals ashore. About this same time, Sister Angela, the Superior of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, offered the services of the Sisters for the "hospital boat" and Flag Officer Charles H. Davis, Commanding the Western Flotilla, wrote to Fleet Officer A. M. Pennock to make arrangements for their coming. There is, however, no conclusive evidence that women served as nurses on the RED ROVER prior to the time that she was fitted out and commissioned as a hospital ship of the United States Navy at the end of the year.

RED ROVER departed Memphis on 24 June 1862 and stopped at Cairo the next day. Here, Fleet Captain Alexander M. Pennock telegraphed at once to the Director of the United States Army Hospital at Mound City to arrange

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who was ordered by Secretary Welles on 16 May 1861 to report to General George B. McClellan, United States Army, to assist in establishing a naval armament on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. He was given able assistance by Naval Constructor Samuel M. Pook. Acting in conjunction with and subordinate to the Army, Commodore John Rodgers purchased three side-wheel steamers at Cincinnati and fitted them for service, the money being furnished by the War Department. They became the wooden steam gunboats TYLER, LEXINGTON, and CONESTOGA, nucleus of the Great Mississippi River Fleet. On 31 November 1861 Commodore Rodgers was relieved when Captain Andrew H. Foote, USN, was promoted to Flag-officer in command of the United States Naval Forces on the Mississippi River and its tributaries, still under control of the Army. It was Flag Officer Foote who took the initial step toward an organized Navy Medical Department on western waters of the interior. While on board the Federal gunboat ESSEX 6 January 1862 he wrote to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles: "Sir: I respectfully request that Surgeon Andrew A. Henderson may be ordered to this Flotilla as Fleet Surgeon. In view of the service in which the Flotilla is engaged, and there being no Naval Surgeon attached to it, I consider the appointment of a Fleet Surgeon desirable alike on the ground of securing good medical treatment and surgery and a judicious and economical expenditure of medical stores. I have the honor to be Very Respectfully Your Obedient Servant A. H. Foote, Flag Officer."

Flag Officer Foote was succeeded by Flag Officer Charles Henry Davis, USN, on 17 June 1862. The service of the Flotilla remained more naval than land. The commanding officers were Navy officers, most of the men were sailors and much of the ordnance stores were supplied by the Navy Department. Though times of confusion and some embarrassment resulted from the mixed nature of this service, there was no want of harmony. On 16 July 1862 the Congress approved an act that the Western Gunboat Fleet, constructed by the War Department for operations on Western waters, be transferred to the Navy Department and on 10 September the Secretary of the Navy wrote Commodore Charles Henry Davis that "1st of October next has been designated as the day for the transfer of the Western Flotilla from the War to the Navy Department . . ." 1 October 1862 was also designated by the War department in its order transferring the Flotilla. At this same time the name of the Western Gunboat Flotilla was changed to the Mississippi Squadron. Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter was appointed Commander of the Squadron, effective the date of transfer, but he did not take command until the 15th. Ships comprising the squadron transferred to the Navy included ten iron-plated gunboats; three wooden gunboats; thirteen steam tugs; eight transport steamers, (including RED ROVER); five wooden gunboats; two ammunition steamers, and one large wharf boat of 4,000 tons used as the Naval Depot at Cairo, Illinois. So on 1 October 1862, the United States Navy acquired its first hospital ship, the USS RED ROVER, then fitting out for the winter.

With the transfer of the Western Flotilla to the Navy came the initial organization of the Navy Medical Department on Western Waters. On the morning of 25 September 1862 Navy Fleet Surgeon Edward Gilchrist reported from Cairo that a very large number of sick belonging to the Mississippi Squadron were in Army hospitals at Mound City and Cairo; and, a very considerable number were in different and distant military hospitals

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throughout the West. He had recommended to Flag Officer Charles Henry Davis that all the men be collected for a medical survey upon them and all sick of the squadron. That same morning he held consultations with the Medical Director of the District and the Army Surgeon of the Mound City Hospital regarding arrangements for the accommodations of the Squadron's sick. He was offered the use of the Mound City Hotel in which all the sick of the Mississippi Squadron could be collected and come under the exclusive direction of Medical officer of the Navy. Gilchrist was convinced that such an arrangement was absolutely indispensable to the proper care of the Navy's sick and to the "regularity and efficiency of the service." He supported this view to Dr. William Whelan, the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery with the following statement: "Heretofore, from the nature of the case there has been every conceivable irregularity in the medical affairs of the squadron and the service would have suffered excessively but for the cheerful and zealous assistance which the medical officers of the Army have always been ready to give us, frequently to their own great inconvenience. The plan proposed will not only relieve them of a great amount of duty and responsibility which properly belongs to us, but is the only one, I am convinced, for the sole organization and management of the medical duty of the Squadron as to deserve your approbation." Gilchrist assured the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery that the Army Medical Director would continue to furnish medical stores for the Squadron as in the past and that the proposal was entirely approved by Fleet Captain Alexander M. Pennock, USN, as well as Acting Rear Admiral Charles H. Davis.

On 29 September 1862 Rear Admiral Davis telegraphed the Chief of Bureau of Medicine and Surgery requesting authorization for delivery of the building for a Naval Hospital, informing him that the "senior medical officer of the Army says our sick numbering 300 must be moved from Mound City Hospital." Approval was obtained in a few days and the Mound City Hotel was rented for the sum of 75 dollars per month for use as a Navy Hospital. This was the beginning of organization for the Navy Medical Department on Western Waters. Prior to this time there were no instructions given to the Service for regulations of medical departments which was "half Navy and half Army", so the irregularities and confusion was not so much from ignorance as from lack of direction and written regulations for carrying out uniform procedures. Unfortunately for the Medical Service of the Navy, many surgeons were confirmed in their irregularities by lack of uniform instructions when the transfer of the Western Flotilla from Army to Navy took place. Acting Rear Admiral Charles H. Davis immediately requested Regulations of the Service be sent for use of the Squadron along with forms used by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery so that all surgeons of the Mississippi Squadron could better and more efficiently serve the Navy. He was relieved by Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter on 15 October 1862 and the latter officer immediately ordered Fleet Surgeon Gilchrist to requisition 600 iron hospital bedsteads in anticipation of the growth of the Mississippi Squadron.

On 23 October 1862 Gilchrist wrote to Dr. Whelan, Chief of Bureau of Medicine and Surgery: "The fitting up of the Hospital and Hospital Boat;

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the care of a great number of sick for whom I had no proper accommodation and the labor of surveying all the sick of the Squadron in this vicinity has brought upon me an amount of work, which has made it impossible hitherto, for one to make such regular and accurate reports to you as I could otherwise have done. Some time must still elapse before the Hospital Department of the Squadron can be regularly and properly organized. It involves a greater amount of labor, than any one not upon the spot, can readily comprehend." Three days later Gilchrist reported he had made a bargain for heating the RED ROVER "throughout with steam by Porter's order." On 12 November 1862 he wrote to Dr. Whelan: "All the sick in this vicinity, belonging to the Squadron have been surveyed." "..... The Naval Hospital at Mound City and the Hospital Boat at that place are now full to overflowing, and the Ordnance Boat "Judge Torrence" is now being converted into a hospital boat for temporary service."

Dr. George H. Bixby and Doctor George Hopkins remained on the RED ROVER as did her Commanding Officer, William R. Wells, all having accepted acting appointments in the service of the United States Navy. According to the medical journal of the hospital ship she had admitted a total of 374 patients by the end of the year 1862. Of this number, 332 were discharged as hospital patients, 37 died, and 5 deserted. Whole number of sick days for patients subsisted amounted to 9,842 days. Her total expenses for the year were listed in her journal as \$3,462.79.

Although crowded conditions of shore hospitals put her in service while she was fitting out for winter, RED ROVER was not commissioned in the United States Navy until 26 December 1862. She was under command of Acting Master William R. Wells, U. S. Navy, who was included in the "Crew numbering 12 Officers" and 35 men, "In all 47 souls." Persons "not shipped" on board and employed in the Medical Department of the RED ROVER soon number about 30. Four of this number were Sisters of the Order of the Holy Cross.

On Christmas Eve 1862, Sister M. Veronica (C. Moran), Sister M. Adela (M. Reilly), and Sister M. Callista (E. Pointan), came on board the RED ROVER, having transferred from the Army Hospital at Mound City for duty which would see the first two mentioned Sisters tending the sick on the hospital ship for the duration of the Civil War. On 9 February 1863 they were joined by Sister M. John of the Cross (C. McLouglin) carried on reports as Sister St. John who served as a nurse on RED ROVER until 30 September 1863. Sister M. Callista left the hospital ship on 2 March 1863 but again reported on board for duty on 28 January 1865. Female negro nurses working under direction of the Sisters on board the RED ROVER when she was commissioned 26 December 1862 were Alice Kennedy and Sarah Kinno. Those who later served were Ellen Campbell, Betsy Young, and Dennis Downs. These women may truly be said to be the pioneers or forerunners of the United States Navy Nurse Corps as they were the first female nurses carried on board a United States Navy Hospital Ship. In addition to the valiant nurses there were several laundresses employed in the Hospital Department of the ship. Referred to in official records as "sundry employees hired by the Medical Department" they were not always mustered since they "cannot strictly be said to belong to the service." Nonetheless they were carried on certain muster rolls as

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well as on invoices kept on board RED ROVER from 1 January 1863 to 31 March 1865 under the heading of "Amounts paid persons 'not shipped' on board U. S. N. Hospital 'Red Rover' employed in the Medical Department." Their number, including men employed, varied from the peak of approximately 40 in the busiest times to as few as 8.

RED ROVER got underway from Mound City at six o'clock the morning of 29 December 1862 and anchored at Memphis, Tennessee that afternoon, reporting to Captain Bishop, General Officer of the Port, on board the GENERAL BRAGG. Five seamen reported to her crew from the GENERAL BRAGG and the paymaster approved the purchase of 124 pounds of fresh meat at eight cents per pound for issue on board. She passed on down river the next day and had left Helena, Arkansas at 2:00 p.m. A half hour after passing Frairs point she met USS LONGSIDE carrying General Gorman who reported the river closed at Bolivar. He had turned back and picked up along shore, a part of the crew of USS BLUE WING taken by Rebels at that place. General Gorman and Dr. Bixby decided to return to Helena for further information in regard to the blockade before risking the safety of their ships. An hour before high noon of 31 December 1862 they again started down river from Helena in the convoy of gunboats LANCASTER and TIGRESS. The convoy passed Napoleon where they found the gunboat CONESTOGA at anchor, and it was exactly midnight when RED ROVER passed Bolivar with her one 32-pounder loaded with grape and all hands at quarters. She escaped notice of Rebel guns and when the LANCASTER stopped to receive wood for her boilers at Island No. 76, Doctor Bixby, Surgeon in Charge of RED ROVER, decided to run his ship to the Fleet without convoy. At 5 p. m., 1 January 1863 he made the mouth of the Yazoo River where he received orders from the Senior Officer to proceed upstream. At 7:30 p.m. he reached the USS BLACKHAWK, Flagship of the Mississippi Squadron ten miles up the Yazoo River, and reported on board to Admiral David D. Porter. The next day RED ROVER returned to the mouth of the Yazoo where transports came down with troops and anchored under the Louisiana shore. In company with the flagship BLACK HAWK, she anchored at the Mouth of the White River on the 7th, remaining there on guard with the ordnance ship JUDGE TORRENCE on the 9th while the Mississippi Squadron stood up the White River. The light flotilla led by RATTLER was followed by Admiral Porter's flagship BLACKHAWK. Next came the iron-clad heavy flotilla and the transports with the gunboat LEXINGTON bringing up the rear. Admiral Porter had assigned RED ROVER and JUDGE TORRENCE the task of guarding the mouth of the White River and the coal barges, notifying any light draft gunboats and all coal or store-boats to stop at the mouth of the White River until further orders. His fleet conducted a naval bombardment, followed by the Army's assault which carried the Post of Arkansas (Fort Hindman) on 11 January 1863. The naval bombardment had ended at 6 p.m. on the latter date and SIGNAL made her way back down the White River to transfer the wounded to RED ROVER who delivered to SIGNAL, ice and fresh beef. Gunboat NEW ERA also arrived with wounded and was given the same service as a commissary boat and transports anchored at the mouth of the White River with troops from Helena, Arkansas.

RED ROVER left the mouth of the White River on 21 January 1863 and was mooring in company with the flagship about a mile below Napoleon when she was fired into by rebels, two shots striking her and entering the hospital.

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She returned the fire with musketry and moved four more miles farther to spend the night. She returned to the mouth of the Yazoo River on 23 January 1863, continuing to care for the wounded and sick of the Mississippi Squadron as it supported the Army expedition to gain control of the Yazoo River as well as the tributary rivers which were instrumental in affording movement of supplies to the Confederate forces at Vicksburg, Mississippi. The magnitude of the Confederate defenses of Vicksburg were intended to repulse any force, naval or military or both combined, which could be brought against them. This made the Federal seige formidable, and the rebel defenses seemed for a time to defy all attempts at their reduction. Meantime, in December 1862, Fleet Surgeon Ninian A. Pinkney had relieved Fleet Surgeon Edward Gilchrist. He made the RED ROVER his headquarters ship and from her flowed the orders, correspondence, pleas, and action of this remarkable man as he overcame the many difficulties and problems obstructing the best care and interest of the Navy sick and wounded of the Mississippi Squadron. To the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery went recommendations for organization and standard instructions to surgeons of the squadron. Acting in concert with Admiral Porter and Fleet Officer Alexander M. Pennock, he pressed upon the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery the need of supplying all the iron-clads with medical officers and the light-draft ships with surgeon stewards so that these fighting ships on frequent detached duty could properly care for their sick and wounded until they reached the RED ROVER or shore hospitals. No opportunity of improving the service seem to escape his attention and his immediate response was to take the advantage in each case. Typical is a letter written by the tireless man of mercy aboard the RED ROVER on 7 February 1863 which reads in part "The fourth paragraph of the Section seventeenth of Regulations, if literally construed and applied to this Hospital Ship, absolutely required that patients having injury or disability likely to entitle them to pensions, or determined by survey, must remain in the hospital until their claim for pension shall have been forwarded to the Department, acted upon, and the decision officially made known to the Fleet Surgeon by it. I desire to be instructed whether such instruction is imperatively binding for the reason that if applied to this Squadron it must give rise to exposure to an unhealthy climate (which might be avoided), liability to overcrowding of the Hospital and overworking of attendants, and serving unnecessary accumulation of accounts here - all of which are serious evils." Seven months later he had lost none of his zeal or concern for men of the squadron when he wrote the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery: "I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your communication directing the appointment of competent Surgeon Stewards to the charge of the Medical Department of such vessels where the Medical Officers could be dispensed with.

I shall in accordance with this order carry out its provisions as far as may be found practicable. I do not think, however, that any reduction can safely be made in the Medical Department of this Squadron, as all of the vessels are placed on separate service.

From the nature of the climate, it is reasonable to suppose that Medical Officers are equally liable to attacks of sickness as other officers; and therefore would require leave of absence. There are at present several whose

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state of health is such as to require change of climate. Their services cannot well be dispensed with until I can obtain medical officers to take their place.

The increased compensation to Surgeon Stewards will enable me to obtain the services of competent men, who can safely take charge of the Medical Department of the smaller vessels."

While RED ROVER watched over the sick and wounded above Vicksburg in the winter of 1862-1863, the wounded and sick accumulated along the rivers without means of providing for them. Finding that Memphis, Tennessee was the most central point as well as the most healthy place on the Mississippi River besides furnishing other advantages not obtained at any other point on the river, Admiral Porter sent Fleet Surgeon Pinkney to visit General Grant in February 1863. The Fleet Surgeon requested permission for the Navy to occupy suitable buildings at Memphis for hospital purposes and the General promptly ordered a rebel building turned over to him. As all hospitals, save for the Mound City Hotel, were in possession of the Army and those being full to overflowing, there was little possibility of accommodating the Navy sick and wounded without scattering them all over the country, removing some at the risk of their lives. Thus the Commercial Hotel of Memphis, Tennessee, was converted to hospital use by the Navy. The hotel was soon providing shelter to 248 brave and gallant men who had periled their lives in defense of the Flag. This Navy hospital was appropriately named Hospital Pinkney in honor of the spunky Fleet Surgeon. Sister St. John, Order of the Holy Cross, left the RED ROVER at the end of September 1863 to take charge of nursing there. Hospital Pinkney largely fulfilled the earlier plea of Fleet Surgeon Edward Gilchrist that the sick of the Squadron be collected and come under the exclusive direction of medical officers of the Navy.

Firing could often be heard from the vicinity of Vicksburg as RED ROVER received the wounded and sick from the various ships of the squadron. From her station at the mouth of the Yazoo, she often ran thirty miles up the river to procure eggs, chickens, milk and such from Harrison's Plantation. These fresh provisions were for the use of the hospital department. Her crew kept busy with many duties. They packed fresh beef in ice, built cattle corrals on shore for the live stock eventually destined for meat supply; buried the dead, took on board stores and provisions; and off-loaded to ships of the Squadron, medical supplies, provisions and stores.

On 16 April 1863 RED ROVER weighed anchor and proceeded down the Mississippi as far as the lower fleet of transports where she landed on the Louisiana shore just above Vicksburg at 10:15 p.m. Now the gunboats and transports passed her by with the intention of running the blockade past Vicksburg. They rounded the point near 11 p.m. and enemy musketry opened up. Soon Confederate heavy guns spoke out as fires were lighted on shore to illuminate the passing Squadron. The gunboats duelled the batteries and the town as they swept ahead at full speed and succeeded in breaking through the blockade. Before the Federal siege ended, some sixteen thousand shells would be thrown from mortars, gunboats, and naval

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batteries upon the Vicksburg and its defense. Moving from these scenes of combat, RED ROVER, overflowing with patients, arrived at Memphis on 23 April 1863. Here she transferred her most serious cases to Hospital Pinkney preparatory to repairs in the Navy Yard. Her repairs were complete by 20 May 1863 when she received eleven men from Hospital Pinkney as crew. She arrived off the White River the next morning and Fleet Surgeon Pinkney came aboard to accompany her on down to the mouth of the Yazoo River. She continued to receive, treat and evacuate the wounded of the fleet on western waters of the interior as it destroyed everything of value along the entire Yazoo River and brought greater pressure to bear on Vicksburg in cooperation with the Army. That Confederate stronghold fell on 4 July 1863 and RED ROVER arrived at Memphis with casualties of that successful Army-Navy siege on the 14th. She anchored at Vicksburg on 30 July and proceeded down river the next day to the Jefferson Davis Plantation and transferred medicine to gunboat CARONDELET thence to Grand Gulf, Mississippi, where she delivered medical supplies to gunboat LOUISVILLE. Continuing down river, RED ROVER visited Natchez, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, then proceeded back up river by way of the various fleet rendezvous to Memphis where she tied to shore near the Navy Yard on 15 August 1863.

RED ROVER remained at Memphis until 17 October 1863 and came to anchor off Mound City on the 19th. At 2 p.m. a board of officers came on board to hold a survey of the hospital ship and her machinery. Only three patients were on board as of the first of the month and only 21 patients were admitted to her care for the remainder of the year while the ice ran heavy in the river and she waited for extensive repairs. She did not get on the ways of the yard until 23 February 1864 and came off on 10 March. She left the yard on 11 April, shifting to Cairo where her commanding officer, Acting Volunteer Lieutenant William R. Wells, reported to Fleet Captain Alexander M. Pennock, USN. Here RED ROVER received medical stores for the fleet, two boxes for Admiral Porter and sick men from steamer CLARA DOLSON. She stood down river on 12 April as the few hundred Federal troops at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, were overwhelmed by several thousand Confederates. An agreement was reached to allow the Union Army to remove their wounded and bury their dead the morning of 13 April 1864. About fifty of the wounded were placed on board PLATTE VALLEY. Those who could walk were brought down the Bluffs, supported on either side by a Rebel soldier. Other Union prisoners were sent in from Confederate camps after PLATTE VALLEY departed.

RED ROVER landed at Fort Pillow at 2 p.m., taking all the wounded (13 soldiers) for care in hospital wards. She got her gun ready for action and prepared for an expected attack from the guns of Fort Randolph as she headed back up river but she passed that Rebel fort without incident. She arrived at Memphis the morning of 14 April, sending the wounded soldiers to the Army Hospital and sick seamen of the Squadron to Hospital Pinkney. She started back down river the next day, putting off medical stores and supplies to ships of the squadron at such places as the mouth of the White and Yazoo Rivers and the Jefferson Davis Plantation below Vicksburg.

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RED ROVER came off the mouth of Red River on 17 April 1864 to support the fleet cooperating with the Army in the expedition up that stream. Upon reaching Springfield the gunboats found that Union land forces were falling back towards Grand Ecore, Louisiana. They were obliged to return down river as they had no infantry to dislodge the Confederate batteries which could be mounted on the river banks. On the return voyage they were constantly taken under fire by the rebels from every available point. Upon reaching Grand Ecore, the gunboats found that the Red River had fallen so low, they could not pass over the rapids. It seemed that the better part of the squadron would be doomed to destruction as the Union Army prepared to evacuate that place. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey, Acting Engineer of the Nineteenth Army Corps, proposed a plan for building a series of dams across the rocks of the falls, thus raising the level of the river. Constructed by Army-Navy men, the dam had a center opening which let the ships ride out on the crest of the water. On 9 May 1864, gunboat LEXINGTON passed into calm deep water, soon followed by the rest of the fleet. Meantime RED ROVER, stationed at the mouth of the Red River, delivered medical supplies, ice, provisions and stores to ships of the fleet as she admitted their sick and wounded to her hospital department.

On 24 May 1864 Acting Volunteer Lieutenant William R. Wells was relieved of command by Acting Ensign Charles King, USN. RED ROVER returned to Memphis on 3 June 1864. By this time the Mississippi Squadron had increased to about a hundred ships, carrying some 460 guns, with crews amounting in the aggregate to about 5,500 men. Kentucky, Tennessee and Arkansas, the upper portions of the states of Mississippi and Louisiana, and the southern portions of those states which bordered on the Ohio River on the north, had been relieved and liberated through the instrumentality of the gunboats acting by themselves, or in earnest cooperation with the Federal Armies. To patrol the great stream which is the Mississippi River from Cairo to New Orleans was a great task whereby Confederate combinations were broken and their organization severed as if by an impassable gulf. Similar patrols were conducted in the Ohio, Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Waters traversed by ships of the squadron were eventually divided into ten naval districts, each under the command of an experienced officer. While the ships in each district had appropriate fields of assigned duty, they were ready to support each other if emergency arose. RED ROVER was not assigned to a particular district. In addition to her service as a hospital ship to the Squadron, she acted as a medical provisions and supply ship, moving down and up river between Cairo and New Orleans, receiving the sick from ships on station and delivering to them the vital medical stores and supplies for use in their medical departments. On her return, she landed her patients to Hospital Pinkney in Memphis, Tennessee. She was in that city the Sunday morning of 22 August 1864 when the Confederate General Forrest with more than 2,000 men entered the city and occupied it about two hours before being driven out. Iron-clad gunboat ESSEX did not have steam up so RED ROVER was lashed to her port quarter, prepared to maneuver upstream should circumstance require. The gunboat CARONDELET had meanwhile arrived to reconnoiter the river below the fort as the Confederates withdrew from the city.

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RED ROVER commenced her last medical supply voyage from Memphis on 24 October 1864. She delivered medical stores to ships at Helena, Arkansas, White River and Red River, thence again to the mouth of the Yazoo and back to Memphis where she arrived on 23 November 1864 to transfer the sick of the squadron to Hospital Pinkney. She received on board men from Hospital Pinkney for duty on 5 December 1864 and started up river on the 7th. Near midnight she rounded to and stood back to Memphis to pick up documents which had been forgotten, thence up river to Island 39, past Fort Pillow and Point Pleasant and Cairo. She reached Mound City, Illinois, on 11 December 1864. This was her location to the end of her career. On the afternoon of 30 December 1864 the gig of Fleet Surgeon Ninian Pinkney came alongside RED ROVER and he embarked along with Doctor James S. Knight, Paymaster A. W. Pearson, Mr. and Mrs. Dudley and their little daughter. The gig's crew consisted of six men and the coxswain and they proceeded in the gig down the river with the intention of reaching the U. S. store ship GENERAL LYONS. They had intended to land a little above the GENERAL LYONS at the landing but got too near the bow of that ship before its hulk could be seen in the dark night. The strong current drifted the gig onto the bow of the GENERAL LYONS. Sinking amidships on the GENERAL LYONS' bow, the gig capsized, throwing all her passengers and crew into the treacherous river. All were rescued except Mr. Dudley and his daughter and two of the crew.

As the Civil War drew to a close, the light draft ironclads of the Mississippi Squadron were detached for service in Mobile Bay where the Confederate Naval Forces in waters of Alabama formally surrendered on 10 May 1865. This marked the end of an organized Confederate Navy which was dealt the final blow with the fall of the three forts at Sabine Pass (25 May 1865) and Galveston, Texas (2 June 1865). Acting Rear Admiral Samuel Phillips Lee had assumed command of the Squadron on 1 November 1864 and he was relieved in August 1865 by Commodore John W. Livingston who closed up the affairs of the Mississippi Squadron in November 1865. RED ROVER continued to care for Navy patients throughout all this time until 17 November 1865 when her eleven remaining patients were transferred to the steamer GRAMPUS. During her career she had admitted only three less than 2,500 patients. 1,697 had been admitted during 11 June 1862-31 March 1865, 332 being from Southern States, 343 from Northern States, 231 from Western States, 376 born in foreign countries, and the nativity of 415 not ascertained. Out of the 1,697 patients admitted during 11 June 1862 to 31 March 1865, 157 had died. An additional 780 patients were cared for by RED ROVER during the period 1 April to 17 November 1865. Her last record of those employed in her medical department is dated 30 April 1865. Sister M. Veronica and Sister Adela were still on board and it is presumed they remained to her last day of service, 17 November 1865. Dr. George H. Bixby who had contributed so much to the effectiveness of the hospital ship was honorably discharged from the Navy on 26 September 1865. He resumed his medical practice in Boston where he engaged important research and wrote numerous treatises.

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Throughout the career of RED ROVER she had an average crew of 40 men and an equal number employed in her hospital department. In addition to the women nurses, there were men to care for the sick. Some of these male nurses were convalescent sailors and soldiers detailed to duty from shore hospitals.

Stripped of her gun and iron-plate, RED ROVER was sold at public auction in Mound City, Illinois, on 29 November 1865. Her purchaser was Mr. A. M. Carpenter who paid \$4,500 for the hulk of the first United States Navy Hospital Ship. Her well equipped medical spaces, cool wards, ice boxes, diet kitchens and expert medical staff were a godsend to the Fleet. It is indeed a tribute to note the absence of severe criticism in reference to her care of the sick and wounded. Among the medical officers who served on her besides Dr. George H. Bixby and Dr. George H. Hopkins, were Assistant Surgeon James S. Knight, Passed Assistant Surgeon Michael Bradley; Acting Assistant Surgeon J. F. Field, Assistant Surgeon J. B. Parker. Acting Assistant Surgeon William F. McNutt, and Acting Assistant Surgeon William H. Willson.

Since the passing of RED ROVER who was the first of her kind to carry women nurses, many luxurious passenger liners have been converted to hospital ships, each one an improvement over its predecessor. The USS RELIEF (AH 1) was the first ship of the United States Navy to be designed and constructed solely for hospital purposes.

RED ROVER was a wooden side-wheel steamer displacing 786 tons and drawing 8 feet of water. The dimensions of her hull are unknown. She consumed $37\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of coal per hour and her maximum upstream speed was nine knots. Her average speed was five knots and her crew numbered 42 officers and men when first commissioned. The average number employed in her medical department was near that assigned as crew. She was armed with one 32-pounder gun.

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